

where he went 10–2 and won a championship. He returned to the University of Georgia his junior year and earned a starting role.

This past season, Stetson Bennett spearheaded the Dawgs to their first college football national championship in 42 years. The dream has become reality.

Stetson inspires me and will inspire others for many years to come.

Congratulations, and go Dawgs.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF OFFICER BOBBY REED

(Mr. CORREA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, today, we honor the life and memory of Officer Bobby Reed.

He was born November 23, 1951, and Bobby Reed's life was about service to his community and to his country.

As a marine, he was deployed overseas to Vietnam, where he served honorably and attained the rank of staff sergeant.

When he returned home to Santa Ana, California, my hometown, he decided to join the local police department to continue protecting and serving his community.

During his 28 years of service on the Santa Ana police force, Officer Reed was honored many times over by his colleagues and his community for his exemplary service and character. Multiple civic organizations, such as Kiwanis and MADD, recognized him with many awards.

He was also elected as a board member of the Santa Ana Police Officers Association, showing, again, his leadership and his positive influence on others.

As we celebrate Bobby's life, may his example continue to shine for the next generation.

□ 0915

#### SPEAKER PHELAN SETS THE BAR HIGH

(Mr. WEBER of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the 76th Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, Representative Dade Phelan of Beaumont, Texas.

Speaker Phelan, who is serving his fourth term representing the great District 21, is one of the most conservative Speakers in our State's history and has made it his priority to significantly improve the lives of Texans every single day.

As only the fourth Republican to hold the Texas House Speakership since 1871, or 151 years, he has set the bar high for any who might follow in his footsteps. He fought to pass landmark legislation that protects businesses, taxpayers, the unborn, religious

freedoms, and our Second Amendment rights.

Under his leadership, the Texas House led on criminal justice reform issues, healthcare affordability, police funding, and addressing winter storm Uri's long-term impact on our State.

I cannot express how proud we are in Texas 14 to claim Speaker Phelan, his wife Kim, and their four precious boys, Ford, Mack, Hank, and little Luke, as our own.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Speaker Phelan for all he does for Texas.

#### ENSURING VETERANS' SMOOTH TRANSITION ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 860, I call up the bill (H.R. 4673) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the automatic enrollment of eligible veterans in patient enrollment system of Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 860, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 117–26 is adopted, and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

##### H.R. 4673

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled.*

##### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

*This Act may be cited as the "Ensuring Veterans' Smooth Transition Act" or the "EVEST Act".*

##### SEC. 2. AUTOMATIC ENROLLMENT OF ELIGIBLE VETERANS IN PATIENT ENROLLMENT SYSTEM OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Section 1705 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(d)(1) *The Secretary shall enroll each veteran described in subsection (a) in the patient enrollment system under this section by not later than 60 days after receiving the information described in paragraph (3) with respect to the veteran.*

“(2) *Not later than 60 days after enrolling a veteran under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall provide to the veteran—*

“(A) *notice of the veteran's enrollment; and*

“(B) *instructions for how the veteran may opt out of such enrollment, at the election of the veteran.*

“(3) *The information described in this paragraph is the appropriate information concerning eligibility for enrollment in the patient enrollment system under this section, as provided by the Defense Manpower Data Center of the Department of Defense, or such successor entity of the Department.*”.

(b) *APPLICABILITY.*—Subsection (d) of section 1705 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall apply to a veteran with respect to whom the Secretary receives the information described in paragraph (3) of such subsection on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) *ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATES OF ELIGIBILITY FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PATIENT ENROLLMENT SYSTEM.*—Not later than August 1, 2022, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs

*shall ensure that any veteran who is eligible for automatic enrollment in the patient enrollment system under subsection (d) of section 1705 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), is able to access—*

(1) *an electronic version of the certificate of eligibility showing the veteran's eligibility for such enrollment; and*

(2) *an electronic mechanism by which the veteran may opt out of such enrollment.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill, as amended, is debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs or their respective designees.

The gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

##### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 4673, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4673, as amended, my bill, the Ensuring Veterans' Smooth Transition, or EVEST Act.

I have made suicide prevention a top priority for the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. Last Congress, we passed bipartisan, bicameral mental health legislative packages, including the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Improvement Act and the Veterans COMPACT Act. This Congress, we continued this work by passing the Sergeant Ketchum Rural Veterans Mental Health Act into law, but there is always more to do.

EVEST builds on our work and finally closes one of the most glaring gaps for veterans being able to successfully access high-quality VA health services, the enrollment process. We shouldn't be trying to hide VA care from those who earned it.

We know that the months following transition out of the military can be very stressful and particularly risky for new veterans in terms of mental health. With the EVEST Act, service-members will be automatically enrolled in VA care during their transition out of the military, with the choice to opt out. This helps simplify the process and prevents veterans from potentially missing out on lifesaving care. It also keeps veterans from having to opt into VA care later and attempt to navigate a new bureaucracy all on their own.

The symptoms of PTSD can be significantly improved in veterans who receive prompt mental healthcare. A 2014 study led by researchers at the San Francisco VA Medical Center looked at nearly 40,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans who received VA mental